

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI  
DELTA DIVISION**

**DIANE COWAN, et al.**

**PLAINTIFFS**

**and**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**PLAINTIFF-INTERVENOR**

**v.**

**Civil Action No. 2:65-CV-00031-GHD  
(previously DC 6531-K)**

**BOLIVAR COUNTY BOARD OF  
EDUCATION, et al.**

**DEFENDANTS**

**CLEVELAND SCHOOL DISTRICT'S REPORT TO COURT ON IMPLEMENTATION  
OF MAY 13, 2016 PLAN**

COMES NOW, Defendant Cleveland School District, by and through counsel, and pursuant to this Court's directive to file a report with the Court detailing the District's compliance with the Court's time line for implementation of the amended Court approved plan, files such report as follows:

**1. Continue implementation of measures commenced earlier.**

The District has continued its implementation of measures outlined in previous reports as discussed in more detail below.

**2. Complete necessary facility renovations, repairs, and other improvements.**

The District is embarking on a 1.8 million dollar renovation and school improvement project at its new middle school and high school to improve academic facilities and provide greater access to facilities for students and staff with disabilities. The District has passed a resolution to finance these renovations with a 3 mil note and has a validation hearing on the bonds set for September 13, 2017 in the Chancery Court of the Second Judicial District of

Bolivar County.<sup>1</sup> These renovations include upgrading the existing science lab at the new Cleveland Central High, providing an elevator at Cleveland Central High to afford greater access to students and faculty with disabilities, bringing entrances and bathrooms into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and building a canopy for students at the new Cleveland Central Middle School.<sup>2</sup> Because these renovations are taking place in potentially historic structures, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History had to approve the renovations. That approval has now been obtained from MDAH. The District's architect is now in the process of advertising the specifications for bidding.

The architect's timeline is as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> Advertisement for Bids	Friday, September 1, 2017
2 <sup>nd</sup> Advertisement for Bids	Friday, September 8, 2017
PreBid Meeting:	Wednesday, September 20, 2017 @ 10:00 a.m.
Bid Opening:	Tuesday, September 26, 2017 @ 2:00 p.m.

The District has completed all painting and minor repairs necessary for the new high school and middle school to open timely, which included replacing the black/gold/Wildcat and Trojan color schemes/mascots with the new Purple/Black/Wolf colors and mascot as well as re-finishing and re-branding the gym floors. Varsity Brands, Inc. has assisted the District in transforming the new high school and middle school with new banners, signs and flags. Varsity

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<sup>1</sup>While signatures in protest of the note were delivered to the Board of Trustees of the Cleveland School District, the signatures did not amount to 20% of the registered voters of Bolivar County. As such, the matter may proceed with a bond validation hearing on September 13, 2017 in Chancery Court. Mississippi Code Ann. 37-59-105.

<sup>2</sup> The District will file with the Court a final, amended list of improvements and renovations to be made consistent with its advertisement for bids on September 1, 2017 and will also file a revised time line, if necessary, should the architect believe the previous time line should be adjusted once bids are taken.

Brands awarded the District a \$50,000.00 grant to assist in its re-branding effort.

3. **With the multiracial advisory panel, engage in publicized roll-out activities (including, but not limited to, introductory, celebratory and commemorative events; school tours and media campaigns) and provide information to all parents and students on the new schools.**

The District has held its “Meet the Wolves” night introducing all of the Wolfpack sports teams and band members to parents and fans. Also introduced were the cheer squads and dance teams for the new schools. Both the middle and high schools have also held open house nights for their schools to give parents a chance to meet teachers and see the buildings. Both the new high school and new middle school principals are making an outstanding effort to keep parents and students abreast of all of these opportunities to engage in the schools. The District is regularly using its website, text messaging and Facebook to make sure all parents and students are informed of upcoming activities.

All of these roll-out events have been extremely well attended. All of the District’s sports and other extra-curricular activities are now in full-wing. The District is proud to announce its 2-0 start in its new 5-A football classification. The football games (as well as other games) have seen packed houses and much enthusiasm from the community.

The community has also come forward with donations for the schools and students. Local businesses and individuals have now pledged thousands of dollars towards a “dual credit” scholarship fund. The goal is that every child who qualifies to take a dual credit class at Delta State University may do so at no charge to the child.

The District has also adopted a final mascot design and has asked a local musician to compose a new alma mater. Both the song and the mascot have been extremely well-received and

have already been showcased at our recent sporting events.

The new high school booster club is successfully moving forward as one club and is providing much needed support through fund-raising for the District's activities.

**4. Work with the advisory panel to finalize activities and efforts to commemorate the traditions of the former schools.**

Emily Jones, archivist at Delta State University, is continuing her task of performing an inventory of all of the artifacts from CHS and ESH. Ms. Jones is still in the process of making this inventory. Once these pictures and trophies are inventoried, the panel will determine which artifacts will be displayed, how these artifacts will be displayed and which will be stored.

**5. Provide uniform training to District administrators, staff, and employees to ensure that educational opportunities are available to all students on a nondiscriminatory basis.**

All administrators and staff have now been given specialized training to ensure that educational opportunities are available to all students on a nondiscriminatory basis. That training took place on July 31 - August 1, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,  
JACKS | GRIFFITH | LUCIANO, P.A.  
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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I, Danny Griffith, attorney for Defendant Cleveland School District, do hereby certify that I have this date served this Report to the Court by electronically filing via the ECF filing system to all registered counsel of record.

Dated: August 31, 2017

By: /s/ Danny Griffith